

THE TRUE DEMOCRAT

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Tallahassee, Friday, April 21, 1905.

In another place will be found a notice of the unexpected death of Hon. J. E. Grady, of Apalachicola. He was a man of many splendid qualities, and his death will be felt far and wide as a distinct loss, not only to the community in which he lived, but throughout the entire State.

The many friends, all over the State, of the venerable Dr. C. A. Fullwood, will regret to learn of his severe illness, at his home in Miami, and his consequent resignation as pastor of the M. E. church there. Dr. Fullwood's service in the Florida conference covers a period of over sixty years.

It is said that before the close of the second week of the session the Senate committee on appropriations had before it bills proposing appropriations aggregating \$316,500, while there is only about \$300,000 available money in the State treasury. Verily, there seems to have been no need of the resolution requiring the appropriations committees to report all bills by May 1st. They could clean out the treasury right now, and not half try.

A Federal grand jury in Chicago is engaged in an investigation of the methods of the "beef trust," in the course of which it came into possession of eight trunks filled with valuable documents pertaining to the secret operations of the Aetna Trading Company, a corporation through which the trust transacted its secret business. Interesting developments are expected from an official examination of the contents of these receptacles, but whether any definite results will ensue is as yet quite problematical.

The monster naval stores export company, the organization of which was begun only a few weeks ago, is now a permanent institution, with Mr. Walter F. Coachman as its president, and a capital, fully subscribed, of one million dollars. Mr. J. P. Williams, president of the G. F. and A. Railroad Company, is one of the vice-presidents, and so plentiful were the offers of subscriptions to the stock that the directors contemplate expanding it to a million and a half. The creation of this concern is a notable instance of correcting the aggressions of one trust by the organization of another.

Some of our contemporaries are inclined to be rather sensitive in the matter of quotations made from their columns without credit. While it is a custom greatly to be commended to give due credit, especially for editorial matter, we have peculiar views on the subject, and are always glad to be able to help out a brother scribe with "copy," whether he acknowledges the source or not. In one of our State exchanges for last week we found seven or eight inches of editorial paragraphs clipped from the columns of The True Democrat, without credit; but the brother was entirely welcome, and is invited to repeat the process whenever he chooses.

THE SENATORIAL ELECTION.

The unanimous re-election by the Legislature of Florida of Hon. James P. Talliaferro as United States Senator, for a term of six years from March 4, 1905, which took place on Wednesday, was in striking contrast with the disgraceful scenes which were enacted in 1897, when the Honorable S. R. Mallory was chosen as a compromise candidate after a long and stubborn contest between other aspirants.

The province of the Legislature on the present occasion was restricted to a mere perfunctory ratification of the choice of the people, made in two successive primary elections last Summer, and the whole transaction demonstrates with unerring certainty the excellence and effectiveness of the primary plan of making nominations to office, as contrasted with the old caucus method.

Of the United States Senator-elect, little need be said. His record in the Senate speaks with resounding eloquence of his extraordinary fitness for the position to which the people have chosen him, and of the inestimable value of his services to the State in that position.

May he live long to serve his State and his country as he has already served them!

THE WAILES-BEARD CLAIM.

We have been asked by two or three influential citizens of the State, members of the Legislature, why we advocate the payment of the Wailes-Beard claim, and if we are interested in it. We desire to say, in the most emphatic manner, that we have no more interest in it, personal or financial, than any other good citizen of Florida should have.

We believe, without a single doubt, that the contract with Mr. Wailes was and is a bona fide one; that he performed faithfully, honestly and effectively his part of the difficult task of securing the evidence, preparing the case, causing a true account of the State's claim to be stated by the accounting officers of the Federal government and enabling the procuring of a final settlement of the claim by Congress—a statement which was the basis on which final settlement was made; that through his efforts, and those of the late Col. W. K. Beard working with and under him at his expense, the people of Florida recovered what was so long due them, and that now the State should carry out its part of the contract in like good faith, and pay Mr. Wailes every cent of the commission contracted for.

How can any conscientious and right-minded citizen doubt the justness of this claim when it is guaranteed, in the most positive and unreserved terms, by such honorable and well-beloved citizens as the late Dr. John L. Crawford, Secretary of State during almost the entire period covered by the existence of the Wailes contract; the venerable and illustrious ex-Governor Wm. D. Bloxham, Secretary of State during Drew's administration, in which the contract was made, and twice Governor of Florida; the late ex-Governor Geo. F. Drew, under whose brilliant leadership Florida was rescued from the hands of the carpet-baggers, and who himself executed the Wailes contract and appointed him to the work he has done so well, as shown by their letters to Colonel Wailes; the late ex-Governor E. A. Perry, whose official career was signalized by a rare and affectionate devotion to the interests of the State he loved so much; the late and highly-honored ex-Governor Henry L. Mitchell, whose rugged and uncompromising honesty was a proverb among his admiring fellow-citizens; the intrepid ex-Governor Francis P. Fleming, whose administration gave to Florida, among many other excellent things, the State Board of Health; those able and distinguished citizens who have so brilliantly represented Florida in the halls of the Congress—Senators Pasco and Mallory and Talliaferro, and Representatives Bullock, Dougherty, Davidson, Sparkman and Davis. Besides these, many of the best lawyers of the State have voluntarily pronounced their opinion strongly upholding the position of Colonel Wailes in this matter, among whom are U. S. District Attorney Wm. B. Sheppard, Judge John C. Avery and Hon. J. J. Sullivan, of Pensacola, and Messrs. Alex. St. Clair Abrams, Cromwell Gibbons and Horatio Bisbee, of Jacksonville; while attached to the Senate minority report on the matter, made the last session of the Legislature, and powerfully advocating the payment in full of this just obligation, are the names of Senators W. Hunt Harris, Wm. A. MacWilliams and W. A. Blount. That of Mr. Blount, who admittedly stands at the head of the Florida bar, is of itself enough to carry conviction to any reasonable mind.

The vital question in the matter now is, Has the State of Florida any more right, morally or otherwise, to repudiate a just and honest obligation than would a private citizen? If not, let her pay the claim, and by so doing prevent an injustice being done to those who have fairly earned what they claim, and also prevent a foul blot upon the proud and honored name of Florida. Florida must not be classed among repudiators.

It may be said that, with so many claims pressing for recognition and appropriations, the State may be hard pushed to meet them all. That does not alter the case. By voting at the last session to pay \$25,000 on the claim, the Legislature in effect admitted the justness of the entire claim, and it is too late now to say that it is unjust or defective. If a vote could be taken, we believe that nine-tenths of the tax-payers of the State would declare that they would rather pay a little more taxes and feel that the State has acted honestly in this matter, than to have the fact recorded in its history that Floridians repudiated an honest debt, incurred under a valid contract, made, ratified and endorsed by the very best and wisest citizens and officials known to her history.

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SCHOOL CONSOLIDATION.

Governor Broward, in his message, referring to the existing State institutions of higher learning, not only recommended that provision should be made for their support by a direct special tax for that purpose, but also urged the Legislature to provide "an efficient system of management, control and supervision," contending that there should be "some official or board" that could be held "responsible for the progress and advancement of the great educational interests of the State."

With a State Superintendent of Public Instruction who is one of the administrative officers of the State government, and a State Board of Education, consisting of a number of such officers, including the Governor, whose province it is to supervise and manage all of the educational institutions of the State, it appears somewhat strange that the Governor should regard those agencies inadequate to the accomplishment of the purposes he mentions, without giving some reasons showing why they are inadequate. Nevertheless, two members of the Legislature, Hon. Jno. P. Wall, of Putnam, and Senator Stockton, of Duval, appear to have taken the Governor at his word, and have introduced bills providing for the abolishment of all of the existing separate boards of trustees now in charge of the several institutions, and the substitution therefor of a general board of fifteen trustees, to whom is assigned the duty of supervision over them all, including one or two now under the control of the State Board of Education. The schools named as intended to be consigned to the care of the proposed general board are: University of Florida, at Lake City; Florida State College, at Tallahassee; East Florida Seminary, at Gainesville; South Florida Military College, at Bartow; State Normal School, (for whites) at DeFuniak Springs and the Normal and Industrial School at St. Petersburg.

No reasonable or fair-minded person will deny that the present situation calls for prompt and radical correction. Yielding to the persistent importunities of local enthusiasts, previous Legislatures have unwisely been persuaded into the indiscriminate bestowal of public funds to divers small but ambitious local schools; these funds have been partly used in the erection of permanent buildings, or the purchase of sites therefor, which are made to appear as investments on the part of the State, and these have been succeeded by incessant appeals to subsequent Legislatures for State funds for additional buildings, for increased salaries to teachers, and for general support, until the protest of the Governor has focussed public attention upon the crying evil which threatens to swamp the treasury or, alternatively, require an increase of taxation.

While heartily approving the recommendation of the Governor that these several institutions, if they must be supported from moneys raised by the taxation of the people, should be required to depend upon a fixed sum, to be produced by a special tax in each instance, we must dissent from the view taken of the Governor's other recommendation as to a change in the system of supervision by the authors of the above mentioned bills.

We contend that the State Board of Education, as now constituted, is abundantly able to supervise the management of all of these several institutions, and to that end, the several local boards of trustees should be abolished and boards of visitors, with restricted powers, be substituted therefor, as was for years the system in successful operation before the new idea of separate trustees was invented.

But there is another phase of this important question which has been much discussed of late, and that is the fact that too much public money is being frittered away upon weak local schools which have not yielded results adequate to justify a continuance of this generous but mistaken policy. We cannot do better at this time in this connection than to direct public attention to the very excellent article printed elsewhere in these columns from the Dunnellon Advocate, as fitly expressing not only our own views, but those of a very large number of taxpaying citizens throughout the State.

A LEFT-HANDED CORRECTION.

The esteemed Bartow Courier-Informant takes exception to a statement in one of our recent issues to the effect that "the Quincy Times refers to the Bartow Courier-Informant and the Jacksonville Metropolis as being 'greatly wrought up' on the subject of the State printing, and as advocating

the ownership by the State of its own printing establishment;" and protests that it "is advocating nothing of the kind."

If we quoted correctly from our Quincy neighbor, it is that newspaper's privilege to make due correction; if we did not, our apologies are due not only to the Courier-Informant but to the Times. Anyway, as we would, in such cases, always rather apologize than fight, we hereby make the customary amend.

The Courier-Informant goes somewhat further into the subject-matter of State printing by most pertinently remarking as follows:

"We protest, however, against the inferior quality of the printing now being forced upon the State. Why the State officials and the Legislature should continue in submission to the State printer is indeed a source of wonder!"

The Courier-Informant is not alone in its amazement at the extraordinary situation now existing with reference to the State printing. It is a problem the solution of which should, and doubtless will, command the best efforts, not only of the appropriate committees, but the entire memberships of both houses.

THE GOOD IT DID.

At an election held in Leon county some time ago the county went dry. Now what good did it do? It looks as if the only parties benefited are the newspaper men. The papers are filled with whiskey ads by parties outside of the county who are bidding heavy for the "jug trade." We noted last week in the leading Tallahassee paper a whole page whiskey ad. Besides that one there were several others—all large and occupying prominent positions. We are always glad when any of the fraternity "happen to a good thing," but that does not prevent us from wondering where the general public is benefited. Every one in Tallahassee who wants whiskey gets it, the express company, the outside dealer and the advertising medium get the benefit of the outlay, and the county gets nothing—Milton Index.

For the benefit of our deluded contemporaries we wish to correct quite a number of its statements quoted above. The question "What good did it do?" may be answered thus: It made Tallahassee a decent, respectable town, from one end of it to the other, to abolish the open saloons; it has made all branches of legitimate trade better than it has been for years; it has helped to keep our young men and boys clean-lived and self-respecting; it has done infinite good to the negro population of the county, who have now more money to expend for better living and clothing and better teams and vehicles, than they have ever had, in the same period of time "since freedom." Thus "the newspaper men are not the only parties benefited."

"The papers" are not "filled with whiskey ads," at least The True Democrat is one that is not. As to the Index having seen "a whole page whiskey ad" in "the leading Tallahassee paper," that of course, is a mistake. This paper is the "leading Tallahassee paper," and it has never permitted a whiskey ad in its columns and never expects to do so.

And, as the lamented Captain Dyke would say, we "capitally doubt" the statement that "every one in Tallahassee who wants whiskey gets it." Some do, no doubt. There is no law to prevent. But the class of people who import liquor by express for personal use is not the class, or classes, for whom the "dry" election accomplished the most good.

"Blind tigers" are said to exist. Doubtless they infest every town in every dry county. That they do is the fault of the officers of the law who fail to execute the law, and not the fault of the people who voted "dry." They did so in good faith, not so much for reasons of expediency or profit as for moral considerations, and their faith in the remedy is stronger now than ever, for the moral atmosphere of Tallahassee never was better.

AN IMPORTANT MATTER.

If the statement contained in the report of a Senate special committee, made to the session of 1899, and in the resolution recently introduced in the House by Hon. J. D. Pirrong, of Calhoun, in pursuance of and in connection with said report, are accepted as true and accurate, the State of Florida is by no means very near bankruptcy, although not a cent of the proceeds of the Indian war claim remains in the treasury save the \$25,000 "appropriated" at the last session to cancel the Wailes claim, and which remains unaccepted.

Mr. Pirrong's resolution recites the salient features of the Senate committee report, showing that there is due from certain land grant railroad and

canal companies, as the ascertained amount of liens upon their grants for money paid out by the Internal Improvement Fund for bonds and coupons secured by lien on such granted lands, the enormous sum of \$1,506,936.51. It also recites the fact that although the Attorney-General was duly authorized and directed to bring suits for the recovery of the respective sums due by the said railroads and canals, no such suits have been begun; and it provides that the Board of Trustees of the I. I. Fund be now "directed" to institute legal proceedings to compel the settlement of such alleged indebtedness.

If this money is legally and lawfully due to the State, certainly the people are entitled to recover it; and, at least, the matter should be brought before the courts, to the end that justice be done, not only to the State but to the various corporations whose interests are involved and the title to whose lands is affected by the existence of the alleged lien.

BRING ON YOUR FACTS.

The Jasper News of April 7 quotes The True Democrat's reference to the Wailes claim, and in support of its own contention that the same is unjust cites the report of the Senate Judiciary Committee in 1903, to show by Mr. Wailes' own testimony that he was employed by the State in other matters besides the Indian war claim; but the News' inference therefrom that he was "being paid a salary" for such services is utterly absurd.

A careful search through the testimony given by Mr. Wailes before that committee fails to show that Mr. Wailes was "paid a salary" at any time for any service rendered to the State. The testimony shows that he received compensation in lands for the other services referred to, as stated by the committee in its report, but there is not a line or a word therein to the effect that he has ever received one cent for the services he performed in the establishment of the Indian war claim, under the contract made with Governor Drew in 1879, and ratified by every subsequent Governor of Florida to the date of the election of Governor Jennings.

The News says: "The News has facts—has statements made by Mr. Wailes himself." If it has any facts, or statements, from Mr. Wailes or from any one else, to the effect that he was "paid a salary" while working on the Indian war claim, for any service, or was ever paid anything for services in connection with that claim, the News certainly should bring forward such "facts;" this is the right time to do so.

WHY NOT?

The Senate committee on public printing is making an exhaustive investigation into the laws of other States governing public printing, with the view of securing all possible information relative to the conduct of this work, which in Florida is rapidly increasing in importance. It has been ascertained that the State of Washington has at Olympia, a State printing office; that the State of California has one at San Francisco, and the State of Kansas has one at Topeka. Correspondence has been entered into with the authorities in these States as to the cost, operation and success of these plants. Boston, it is understood, operates a plant for its municipal work. A number of other States and cities have not as yet been heard from. Some revision or change in Florida's present laws on this subject is certainly needed, both in the interest of the people and that of the printer. Whether State ownership is advisable or not is of course, at present an open question.—Tallahassee correspondent, Times-Union.

Why not "go back to first principles" and simply elect a State printer by the votes of the Legislature in joint session, as was done for so many years when Capt. Chas. E. Dyke was living?

The plan of offering discounts on all taxes if paid by certain dates, and imposing interest on overdue taxes, according to a graduated scale, has worked so well in the city of Pensacola that the Escambia county school board at its last meeting adopted a resolution urging the Legislature to adopt the rule with respect to all taxes, and thus relieve school officials from the annual necessity of borrowing to "tide over" until taxes are collected. The specific provisions of law recommended are as follows: "1st, that on all taxes paid in November a discount of 2 per cent be allowed; 2nd, that on all taxes paid in December a discount of 1 per cent be allowed; 3d, that taxes paid in January be at par; 4th, that for February and for each month and fraction of a month thereafter until the closing of the tax books each year, the tax-payer be required to pay one-half of 1 per cent interest on taxes assessed against him."

The Pensacola trip will be a revelation to many of the members who have never seen western Florida.